Assessing the Strategic Credibility of Academic Library Circulation and Reference Departments

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Key Findings - Reference

- **Demonstrated performance**
  - 100% of Alliance reference services do not report statistics, assessment, or impact on reference webpages.

- **Capability to Strategize**
  - Only 3 reference services pages include a mission statement. 15 libraries do not have reference webpages at all.

- **Communication to Stakeholders**
  - Most state WHAT they do (answer questions) but not WHY (learning, education, scholarship, student success).

Strategic Credibility Factors

- Demonstrated performance
- Capability to strategize
- Communication of organizational strategy to key stakeholders
- Credibility of organizational leadership

Methodology: Strategic Planning and Mission Statements

- Individually examined Orbis Cascade Alliance college/university mission statements for themes
  - Discussed findings and reached consensus

- Individually examined Orbis Cascade Alliance Library Circulation/Reference/Ask A Librarian web pages for mission alignment
  - Discussed findings and reached consensus

- Negotiated common themes (how well-aligned)

Common Aligned Themes in Mission Comparisons

- **College/University Mission Statements**
  - Research (6)
  - Teaching (1)
  - Community (1)
  - Health (1)

- **Reference Themes**
  - Access (6)
  - Community (4)
  - Study Areas (1)
  - Responsibility (1)

- **Overall Reference Services Alignment with College/University Mission**
  - 78% — No alignment (29)
  - 14% — 1 common theme (5)
  - 2% — 2 common themes (1)
  - 2% — 3 common themes (1)
  - 2% — ALL common themes (1)

- **Overall Circulation Alignment with College/University Mission**
  - 73% — No alignment (27)
  - 22% — 1 common theme (7)
  - 5% — 2 common themes (2)